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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MAPUTO 000487

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PHUM](#) [SMIG](#) [PREF](#) [MZ](#) [ZM](#)  
SUBJECT: MOZAMBIKAN GOVERNMENT DECLARES STATE OF EMERGENCY  
IN RESPONSE TO XENOPHOBIA IN SOUTH AFRICA

REF: 07 MAPUTO 1239

Classified By: Political Officer Leonel Miranda, Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)  
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11. (C) SUMMARY. On May 22, as the xenophobic violence in South Africa entered its second week, the Mozambican government (GRM) declared a state of emergency to deal with a massive influx of thousands of Mozambican citizens fleeing the violence. GRM border immigration authorities stated that from May 19-22, nearly 12,000 Mozambicans resident in South Africa had crossed the Ressano Garcia border post into Mozambique. While news reports are somewhat conflicting, between five and 10 Mozambicans reportedly have been killed and hundreds have lost businesses and most of their possessions since the outbreak began on May 11. Many in the Mozambican press blame the xenophobia in South Africa and subsequent flood of Mozambican returnees on the unresolved crisis in Zimbabwe. The Foreign Minister told the Charge on May 23 that he understood that these attacks were a spillover from the Zimbabwe electoral crisis and further complicated the strains being experienced within SADC. END SUMMARY.

12. (U) In declaring a state of emergency, the GRM activated the National Emergency Operations Center (CENOI), which is headed by the Prime Minister and is comprised of nearly all government ministries. CENOI will coordinate all GRM assistance to returnees. So far, the GRM has dispatched to the border teams from the National Disaster Management Office, the Mozambican Red Cross, and Immigration and Customs to provide logistical and humanitarian assistance, such as the provision of soup, water, and transportation to Maputo. Media reports note that since May 20, the GRM has sent a constant "fleet" of minivans to the border to transport thousands of Mozambicans to temporary shelters\*one at a factory warehouse in Maputo, and a larger, better equipped center in Beluluane.

13. (U) Reports from the Ressano Garcia border present a chaotic situation. A Catholic nun operating a shelter at the border told poloff that the situation was "desperate." Thousands of exhausted, frightened, and hungry Mozambicans have arrived in a small, crowded town with few services. Migration authorities noted that the number of Mozambicans fleeing the violence has increased each day this week from 2725 on May 19, 2911 on May 20, 3300 on May 21, and 3000 on May 22. With estimates ranging from 1 to 3 million Mozambicans resident (90 percent illegally) in South Africa, there is the potential that the border could be further overwhelmed with returnees. Most arrivals do not have passports: some are illegal residents and others claim their passports were destroyed during the violence. As a result, GRM migration authorities are struggling to register returnees in order to coordinate assistance.

14. (SBU) The GRM has appealed for calm and urged its citizens not to take revenge on foreigners resident in Mozambique. The GRM further encouraged Mozambicans to appeal to their

peaceful nature and provide all possible support to the returnees. Nevertheless, a common reaction among Mozambicans is that South Africans involved in these attacks seem to forget the valuable support Mozambique provided to the ANC in its struggle against apartheid. There are isolated reports of some cars with South African license plates being pelted with rocks by angry Mozambicans. Widely distributed phone messages urged Mozambicans "to be patriots" and not to shop or spend any money in South Africa. These reactions follow disturbing media reports of interviewed returnees detailing how mobs violently killed at least five Mozambicans, destroyed businesses, burned homes, and confiscated possessions. One interviewed Mozambican related that the South African police merely stood by and watched, under orders only to help evacuate immigrants--not to take action against the attackers. Representatives from one of Mozambique's leading business organizations plan to travel next week to Johannesburg to meet with South African business leaders to urge immediate action to protect Mozambique's workers, noting that a Mozambican boycott against South African businesses would especially damage the economic interests of many in Nelspruit and the Mpumalanga Province.

15. (C) Foreign Minister Oldemiro Baloi told the Charge on May 23 that the GRM was frustrated and disappointed with the South African Government's reaction to the xenophobic attacks. He reported that the SADC Ambassadors in Pretoria delivered a Note Verbale to the SAG earlier in the week to complain about the weak performance of the South African police force in protecting SADC citizens. Baloi also telephoned the Foreign Minister to urge greater action but said he was pleased by the latest SAG efforts to augment

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security. Meanwhile, the MFA here has worked with the Mozambican Embassy in Pretoria to arrange for a steady stream of buses from Gauteng Province to the border with Mozambique.

The Foreign Minister concluded that this violence in South Africa, which he clearly understood to be a spillover from the Zimbabwe electoral crisis, further complicates the strains being experienced within SADC.

16. (C) COMMENT: Despite the government's declared state of emergency, the massive influx of Mozambican returnees presents the GRM with a significant challenge. The GRM has had some initial success transporting returnees to Maputo and providing them with temporary shelter, but the sheer numbers of returnees may quickly overwhelm available resources. In addition, many of the returnees have tenuous ties to Mozambique ) no family, no jobs, and no money - having lived in South Africa twenty years or longer. Some fear the influx of returnees will exacerbate the already elevated crime rate in Maputo and other towns in Southern Mozambique. Many in the Mozambican press and on the streets have stated the obvious: the emergency situation in Mozambique created by the xenophobia in South Africa is a direct result of the continuing unresolved crisis in Zimbabwe. The Foreign Minister lamented that this unanticipated development could have a lasting negative impact on Mozambique's bilateral relations with South Africa.

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